

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 38266

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, FR, US, IS, XF
SUBJECT: ISRAELI AMBASSADOR UPSET BY FRENCH FOREIGN
MINISTER'S TV REMARKS ABOUT MIDDLE EAST

SUMMARY: ISRAELI AMBASSADOR IS HIGHLY DISTURBED BY
FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTER'S REPORTED REMARKS ON TV THAT
PALESTINIANS DESERVE A STATE AND THE USG IS PREPARING
TO COERCE ISRAEL INTO AGREEING. END SUMMARY.

1. ISRAELI AMBASSADOR GAZIT CAME TO SEE ME AT HIS
REQUEST TODAY IN HIGH DUDGEON ABOUT REMARKS BY THE
FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTER DURING A TV INTERVIEW
DECEMBER 28. ACCORDING TO NEWSPAPER ACCOUNTS OF THE
INTERVIEW, FOREIGN MINISTER DE GUIRINGAUD MADE THE
FOLLOWING POINTS ABOUT THE ARAB-ISRAELI PROBLEM:
(A) THE MOMENT IS BETTER NOW THAN IN MANY YEARS
FOR THE SUCCESSFUL PURSUIT OF A MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT;
(B) AN AGREEMENT IS POSSIBLE WITHIN THE CONTEXT
OF THE GENEVA CONFERENCE WHICH WOULD ACCORD THE
PALESTINIANS A STATE AND WOULD ASSURE SECURE AND
GUARANTEED FRONTIERS TO ALL STATES IN THE REGION; AND
(C) UNITED STATES POLICY HAS EVOLVED CONSIDERABLY
IN RECENT YEARS IN ITS RECOGNITION OF THE PALESTINIAN
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REALITY, AND THE USG IS PREPARED TO EXERCISE PRESSURE
ON ISRAEL TO RECOGNIZE A PALESTINIAN STATE. FRANCE
SUPPORTS THE UNITED STATES ON THIS.

2. GAZIT COMPLAINED THAT DE GUIRINGAUD'S USE OF THE
WORD STATE IS A FURTHER ESCALATION OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

IN FAVOR OF THE PALESTINIANS AT THE EXPENSE OF ISRAEL. THE LAST TIME DE GUIRINGAUD ADDRESSED THE SUBJECT HE SAID THE PALESTINIANS HAVE THE RIGHT TO THEIR OWN IDENTITY HAVING THE QUALITIES OF A STATE. HE LATER TOLD GAZIT THAT THE GOF WAS BEING DELIBERATELY VAGUE. GAZIT SAID HE IS ALL THE MORE INCENSED BY THIS STATEMENT BECAUSE HE HAD SEEN DE GUIRINGAUD ONLY A FEW DAYS BEFORE THE TV INTERVIEW AND HAD BEEN TOLD THAT FRANCE WOULD HENCEFORTH ABANDON ITS POLICY OF SINGULARITY IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND BE MORE EVENHANDED.

3. ON THE SUBJECT OF DE GUIRINGAUD'S REPORTED REMARKS ABOUT US POLICY, GAZIT SUGGESTED THAT THE USG NOT LET THE MINISTER'S STATEMENT PASS WITHOUT SETTING THE RECORD STRAIGHT. I REPLIED THAT WE STILL DID NOT HAVE THE TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINISTER'S REMARKS, WHICH RECEIVED ONLY MINOR COVERAGE IN THE PRESS. LE MONDE HAD THE ITEM BURIED ON THE BACK PAGE WHILE THE OTHER MAJOR DAILIES IGNORED THE PALESTINE ITEM COMPLETELY IN FAVOR OF THE MINISTER'S REMARKS ABOUT OPEC AND SPAIN.

4. COMMENT: AMBASSADOR GAZIT HAS NOT BEEN HAPPY HERE, TO PUT IT MILDLY. HE CAME WITH HOPES OF PERSUADING THE FRENCH UNDER GISCARD TO TAKE A MORE BALANCED VIEW OF THE MIDDLE EAST. EACH TIME THE FOREIGN MINISTER OR THE PRESIDENT TALK ABOUT PALESTINIAN RIGHTS, HOWEVER, GAZIT FEELS BETRAYED, NO MATTER HOW MUCH THESE STATEMENTS ARE BALANCED BY CALLS FOR GUARANTEED AND DEFENSIBLE BORDERS.

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5. ACTION REQUESTED: WHILE WE SEEK TO VERIFY WHAT DE GUIRINGAUD SAID SPECIFICALLY DURING THE INTERVIEW, EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE LATEST DEPARTMENT GUIDANCE ON PALESTINIAN RIGHTS AND THE EVENTUALITY OF A PALESTINIAN STATE.

GAMMON

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